

Racial Equity Plan

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2024

massculturalcouncil.org



**Mass
Cultural
Council**

Power of culture

*We believe in a
more equitable
investment in the
#PowerOfCulture*

The images featured throughout this document include work by and pictures of artists supported by **Mass Cultural Council's FY21 Artist Fellowships**.

On the cover:
Still image from the film *Drip Like Coffee*
by Anais Cisco (Film & Video Finalist '21)

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From the augmented reality project *ReachYou* by Katrina and Jonah Goldsaito (Sculpture/Installation/ New Genres Finalists '21).



PURPOSE

Mass Cultural Council's Race Equity Plan proposes to strengthen and extend the work of the Agency's 2017 Strategic Plan's goal of Advancing Inclusion and Equity to align with the Governor's **Executive Order No. 592** and to provide racially equitable investment in the cultural sector. This document is a living document and will be revised and updated as needed.

Mass Cultural Council stands in solidarity with movements that are working to improve the lives of those oppressed, marginalized, and targeted by the breadth of White Supremacy in the United States. With this three-year plan, Mass Cultural Council commits to doing the ongoing and long-term work of being an anti-racist Agency. The Agency is dedicated to racially equitable investments in historically underinvested communities, and will focus on two (2) main areas:

- > **External**— Support and encourage an equitable and anti-racist cultural sector in the Commonwealth by increasing the financial investments and support services for under-resourced organizations, communities, schools, and artists.
- > **Internal**— Strengthen Mass Cultural Council's operational and governance practices, policies, and procedures by evaluating them through a racial equity/anti-racism lens.

MISSION

The Mass Cultural Council is an independent state agency that promotes excellence, inclusion, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and sciences, fosters a rich cultural life for all Massachusetts residents, and contributes to the vitality of our communities and economy.

The Council pursues this mission through a wide range of grants, initiatives, and advocacy for artists, communities, organizations, and schools.

*A vision of the world that honors a variety of perspectives
makes for a richer and more productive cultural sector.*

RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT

Mass Cultural Council works to invest financial, programmatic, and informational resources equitably. It also provides leadership to repair, heal, and build toward a cultural sector where racial diversity flourishes, decolonization of art and the cultural sector is achieved, and inclusion and belonging is the norm. Massachusetts' communities, residents, and visitors benefit from robust diversity in the cultural sector, without which the Commonwealth cannot continue to thrive.

A vision of the world that honors a breadth/variety of perspectives makes for a richer and more productive cultural sector. Seeing the world through different perspectives and bringing those ideas to life is the charge of the cultural sector and its leaders. Mass Cultural Council supports these creative visions and visionaries with co-creative, innovative, equitable, inclusive, and decolonized programming and grant making.



For nearly a decade, **Michael J. Bobbitt** has been committed to racial equity: leading workshops, speaking on panels, delivering keynote addresses, and consulting with numerous organizations in the cultural sector and beyond. He received his Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training from **NTL Institute, ArtEquity, The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Leadership Greater Washington/Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, and Cornell University**. *Photo: Johnny/BTS Design Studio.*

“

As a Black, gay, cis-gendered, able-bodied, educated, Boston-based male artist, married to a white man, and the father of a Vietnamese child, I believe that racial equity, anti-racism, decolonization, diversity, inclusion, access, and all the words used to describe these incredible social justice movements are acts of love. Through these actions, we are showing love to people who may have never been loved, or felt loved, by this country.

These acts of love must be more than statements and performative gestures to support beliefs and principles of anti-oppression and anti-racism. They must shift the culture toward intolerance for oppression and dismantle marginalization. These acts of love are also an acknowledgement of past harm. Even as a person who has been educated, enjoys middle class means and is in a leadership position with privileges of power, I experience acts of hate, discrimination, and oppression daily. Every oppression that I encounter fuels my desire for change. All of my privileges provide me with the power to affect change. That is my charge. I dream of a utopia where we are all captivated, fascinated, and rivetted by people's uniqueness, because we feel that it is the thing that makes the world...the world.

—MICHAEL J. BOBBITT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



“

Mass Cultural Council is committed to supporting the strategic leadership needed to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization in the cultural sector, access, and racial justice work as a core principle.

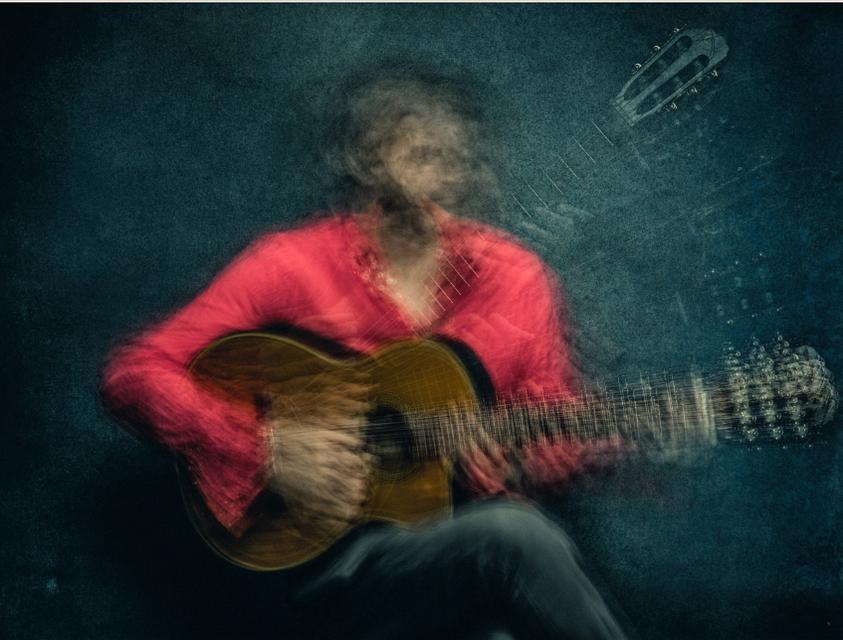
We believe it is not enough to envision a better world: we must build it, starting with the Agency’s support and services to the cultural sector.

As BIPOC leaders of the Council, we know that culture is intrinsically valuable and unique in its ability to lift the human spirit.

Cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. Mass Cultural Council strives to be a leader in making Massachusetts a place where diversity, equity, and inclusion are celebrated.

—NINA FIALKOW, CHAIR & MARC CARROLL, VICE CHAIR

Image of Nacho González Nappa
(Music Composition Fellow '21).



SERVING A DIVERSE MASSACHUSETTS

“The 2020 decennial U.S. Census painted a portrait of a diversifying Massachusetts, and those changes stretched far beyond the state’s burgeoning urban centers to touch nearly every single municipality...Every single city and town in the Bay State except for one saw its share of white residents as a percentage of the local population decrease from 2010 to 2020, matched by corresponding increases in the share of residents identifying as Black, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or some other racial demographic, according to data Census Bureau officials released.” —WLLP.COM on August 19, 2021

As a state agency, Mass Cultural Council’s mandate is to serve all residents of the Commonwealth. Although Mass Cultural Council does not have reliable data to determine the demographic makeup of the Massachusetts cultural sector at present, the Agency is committed to collecting clear and inclusive identifications of BIPOC and systemically excluded individuals and organizations to better measure and increase our investments in those communities moving forward.

We acknowledge that philanthropy has failed nationally to invest in and meet the need of BIPOC individuals and organizations. 30% of the U.S. population is Black and/or Latinx, but only 4% of the philanthropic sector’s contributions go to organizations led by Black or Latinx individuals reports **New Profit**. Likewise, as reported by **CANDID**, Alaska Natives and Native Americans represent 2% of the total U.S. population, but only receive 0.4% of total annual funding from large U.S. foundations. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders represent 7% of the population, but only receive 0.2% of domestic foundation funding, reports **AAPIP.org**.

While Mass Cultural Council is a state agency, and its grantmaking is not philanthropic but a public investment into an important economic sector, this data supports the need for the Agency to become more intentionally inclusive when designing programs and services to ensure we are reaching all residents of the Commonwealth.



A historic movement for justice has highlighted the unbearable human costs of systemic racism.

—PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

FOLLOWING NATIONAL AND STATE LEADERSHIP EFFORTS

Our efforts to be an equitable Agency align with the public outcry and demand for equity, the goals of the President of the United States, and the directives issued by Governor Charlie Baker.

➤ **Massachusetts Executive Order No. 592: Advancing Workforce Diversity, Inclusion, Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Affirmative Action**

“WHEREAS, while acknowledging the many efforts and accomplishments of the past, the Commonwealth can and must do more to ensure that non-discrimination, diversity, and equal opportunity are safeguarded, promoted, and reflected in state workplaces, programs, services, policies, activities, decisions, and contracts...”

—GOVERNOR CHARLIE BAKER

➤ **Presidential Executive Order Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government**

“Whole-of-government initiative to embed racial equity across federal policies, programs, and institutions. That starts with a review of policies and institutions to redress systemic racism where it exists and to advance equity where we aren’t doing enough. Every agency will place equity at the core of their public engagement, their policy design, and program delivery to ensure that government resources are reaching Americans of color and all marginalized communities.”

—SUSAN RICE, DOMESTIC POLICY ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Mass Cultural Council has further referenced DEI tools and resources provided by other state offices:

- **Department of Higher Education (DHE)’s Equity Agenda**
- **Department of Mental Health (DMH) Office of Race, Equity & Inclusion**
- **Committee for Public Council Services (CPCS) Children & Family Law Division**

Boy with Rooster (2019) by Zhidong Zhang
(Photography Fellow '21).



CONTINUING MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL'S 2017 DEI COMMITMENT

This Racial Equity Plan is a recommitment and deepening of **Mass Cultural Council's 2017 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan**. In 2017, Mass Cultural Council approved its **Strategic Plan**, which was then extended in 2021 for an additional year. The Strategic Plan directs our goals and desired outcomes, and by a legislative act (**FY22 State Budget Chapter 24 of the Acts of 2021, Section 2, Line Item 0640-0300**), our distribution of resources must align with our Strategic Plan goals. One of those goals is:

ADVANCING INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Promote more diverse and inclusive participation in the cultural sector by ensuring equity in policies, practices, and opportunities.

Objectives:

- Cultivate a culture of equity and inclusion within Mass Cultural Council to ensure these values are reflected in all our grants and initiatives.
- Encourage full participation in Mass Cultural Council-supported programs by promoting universal design principles, inclusive practices, and equitable access for all.
- Increase diversity in the sector by creating connections and expanding leadership opportunities for people of color, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups.
- Support artists and organizations working in diverse cultural traditions and/or underrepresented communities, with improved outreach, focused investment, and technical assistance.

A few highlights of Mass Cultural Council's work since 2017 include:

- Intentional diversification of employees.
- Expansion and investment in access programs and access to Agency services.
- Creation and support of racial affinity group.

➤➤ [Read the full 2017 DEI Plan](#)

THE PROCESS: DESIGNING & UPDATING THE PLAN

Using an inclusive process, every Mass Cultural Council employee was invited to submit action items and the Racial Equity Plan Task Force (created in April of 2021), made up of diverse members of the Agency's employees and governing Council, gathered for several meetings to turn those action items into **S.M.A.R.T Outcome Goals** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based).

This FY22-24 Racial Equity Plan comes after years of training and education.

- The Agency engaged with the Disruptive Equity Education Project (DEEP) on a year-long series of workshops to educate the Agency and Council on the personal challenges of engaging in equity work, encourage the development of a mission and vision for equity, and build our capacity to develop actionable plans to sustain professional development learning.
- The Agency contracted with Third Eye Cultural Collaborative to provide an organizational assessment framework to help us assess our current ability to meet the goals of our new strategic plan, specifically the goal of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The Agency began a series of cultural competency trainings with Multicultural BRIDGE.
- In September 2020, Mass Cultural Council hosted a **Racial Equity Listening Series** with the cultural sector.
- The Agency also created an internal People of Color Employee's Affinity Group, which continually provides valuable input and perspectives.

This plan is both a continuation and an evolution of Mass Cultural Council's response to the world's demands for change. The Agency has learned much in the creation of this plan and will continue to learn.

In addition to our work on racial equity, the Agency will acknowledge and deepen our work on:

- Intersectionality as it relates to racial injustice. The Agency understands that equity involves many aspects around disenfranchisement, but this plan focuses solely on racial equity. This will help:
 - Develop the framework to build a suite of subsequent plans that provide space to specifically name and address other inequities like disability, gender, sexuality, rural communities, etc.
- Decolonization as it relates to the cultural sector. The Agency acknowledges the necessity to understand how decolonization works, particularly in a cultural context. The focus will be on decolonization as a part of creating equitable grantmaking, inclusive programming, and recognition of marginalized cultural communities.
- The use of the term **BIPOC** (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). The Agency recognizes that language is fluid, and the intersectional justice and equity movement is redefining terminology regularly. The use of the term BIPOC is not meant to erase or exclude.

The plan is a working document and new actions will be added as needed. A quarterly progress report on the Race Equity Plan will be shared at open Council meetings and with the cultural sector.

The plan outlines the Agency's goals, desired outcomes, and action items. Each action item will have numerous, specific, and carefully considered tactical steps to assist in achieving our stated outcomes over the course of executing the plan.

As tactical steps are developed, the Agency will engage with tools provided by state and national colleagues, such as:

- **Racial Equity Data Roadmap from Department of Public Health**
- **Racial Equity and School Health Resources**
- **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Equity Choice Points**

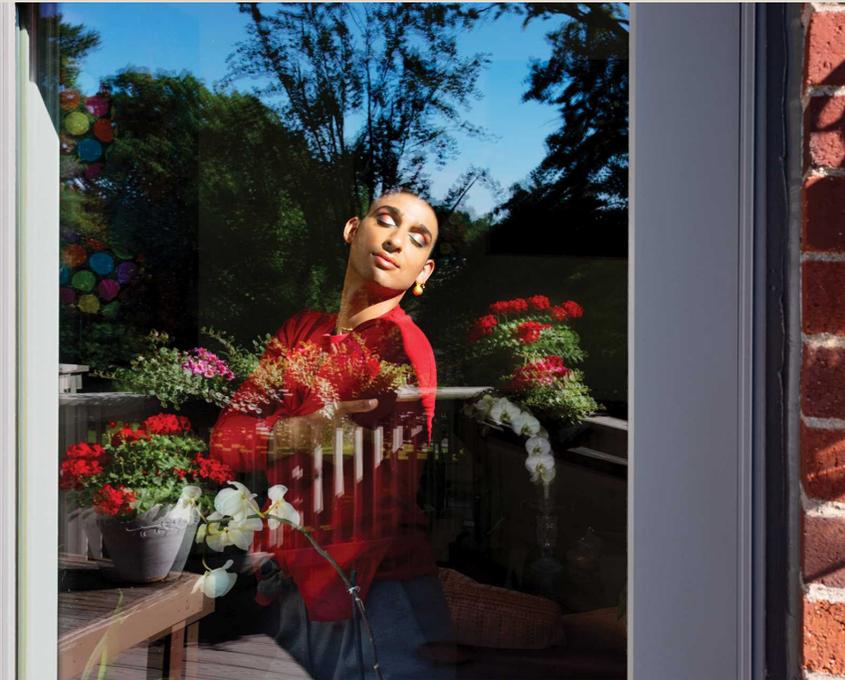


参观

To Night

The Plan

Cyrus (2020) by Rania Matar
(Photography Fellow '21).



On the previous page: From the installation *Lantern Stories*
(created in Boston's Chinatown) by Yu-Wen Wu (Sculpture/
Installation/New Genres Fellow '21, Painting Fellow '04).

EXTERNAL ACTIONS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS & APPLICANTS

The following action steps are designed to support those who seek and those who receive grants and services from Mass Cultural Council, including:

- Organizations
- Communities
- Artists
- Youth (Creative Youth Development and Education).

Programs in these categories include CIP Portfolio, Gateway, and Projects; Cultural Facilities Fund; Universal Participation Initiative; Social Prescription; Gaming Mitigation; Local Cultural Council; Festivals; Cultural Districts; Artist Fellowships, Traditional Arts Apprenticeships, YouthReach; META Fellowships; STARS Residencies; and other programs serving Mass Cultural Council constituents.

Please note that our fiscal year runs July 1 – June 30.

GRANTS

Goal: To center racial equity, build relationships/trust, and sustain investment in the most marginalized and historically underfunded BIPOC applicants, Mass Cultural Council will:

FISCAL YEAR 22

- Create an ongoing outreach plan, utilizing BIPOC Outreach Coordinators, to engage, connect, meet, and welcome prospective and current BIPOC applicants who are not presently or sufficiently supported by Mass Cultural Council programs by Fall 2021.
- Review and revise all steps of the grantmaking process with a racial equity lens by Winter 2022 and implement the new process for FY23 grant cycles.

FISCAL YEAR 23

- Develop capacity building grants to fund operational infrastructure and professional development for BIPOC applicants by Summer 2022 with Council approval.

Still image from the film *Cuando La Rumorosa Calla*
by Patricia Montoya (Film & Video Fellow '21).



FISCAL YEAR 24

- Design and implement programs and services that promote the participation of BIPOC applicants and help align our constituents with the Commonwealth's racial demographics by Summer 2023.
- Require applicants to provide an annual statement of recent or ongoing anti-racism/racial equity/decolonization in the cultural sector and/or intersectional justice training, policies, reparative processes, or actions for the FY24 grant cycles.

ONGOING

- Identify, investigate, and repair instances of racism, discrimination, or exclusion in our granting.
- Assess the Agency's historic and current funding practices using a racial equity lens by conducting annual evaluations and revisions.
- Engage BIPOC cultural workers in the ongoing assessment and revisions of our grantmaking.
- Work to significantly increase our grantmaking to BIPOC applicants by 2026.
- Work towards more equitable representation of BIPOC/non-BIPOC panelists on all internal grant review panels.
- Encourage significant racial diversity on Local Cultural Councils.

SERVICES

Goal: To perpetuate a culture of anti-racism/racial equity in the cultural sector, Mass Cultural Council will:

FISCAL YEAR 23

- Provide, promote, and upgrade our technical assistance and translation services by Summer 2022, with a focus on reaching new BIPOC communities.
- Launch a base-level anti-racism/racial equity/decolonization in the cultural sector training program (workshops, seminars, etc.) curated by BIPOC authors/creators/consultants/facilitators and partners to the field by Summer 2022.

FISCAL YEAR 24

- Work with a consultant to design, build, and launch a complimentary, self-administered Cultural Equity Index to diagnose equity issues and recommend corrective suggestions as an aid for applicants wishing to build capacity for anti-racism, racial equity, and decolonization in cultural sector by Summer 2023.
- Develop a toolkit of best practices for creating and implementing organizational racial equity/anti-racism/decolonization in the cultural sector plans for the cultural sector by Summer 2023.

Image of Naseem Alatrash
(Music Composition Fellow '21).



INTERNAL ACTIONS FOR AGENCY PROCESSES

The following action steps are designed to support the internal work at Mass Cultural Council.

- **Agency Operations:** The internal operations of Mass Cultural Council are a critical part of creating the culture of equity needed to support the field.
- **Governing Council:** Mass Cultural Council is governed by a board of private citizens appointed by the Governor for staggered three-year terms. Council members represent various regions of the state and have demonstrated distinguished service, creativity, and/or scholarship in the arts, humanities, or sciences.

Goal: To ensure a culture of anti-racism/racial equity/decolonization in the cultural sector, diminish the potential for harm, and sustain this culture throughout our operational practices, Mass Cultural Council will:

FISCAL YEAR 22

- Hire an employee dedicated to managing and leading the internal and external anti-racism/racial equity/decolonization in the cultural sector work, in collaboration with Mass Cultural Council's intersectional disability justice program (Universal Participation Initiative) by Fall 2021.
- Uncover and eradicate any unintended racial biases that may exist in the Employee Human Resources Handbook and delete terminology that might deter BIPOC applicants from applying in job descriptions/postings, and RFPs (Requests for Proposals) by Fall 2021.
- Add language to all Mass Cultural Council job descriptions to ensure that applicants and staff alike recognize that the Agency's goals include "Advancing Racial Equity" by Fall 2021.
- Create employee meeting norms that promote "safe spaces" for BIPOC and other employees from marginalized populations by Winter 2022.
- Complete a pay equity assessment (a continuation of the 2017 Strategic Plan) for all employees, as outlined by the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act, by Winter 2021 and adjust salaries, if necessary, by Summer 2023 or sooner.

El sueño de María (2020) by Claudia Ruiz Gustafson
(Photography Fellow '21).



FISCAL YEAR 23

- Develop a safe racism incident reporting system for internal HR needs and external constituent services by Summer 2022.
- Build a racial equity/anti-racism/decolonization in the cultural sector orientation guide, trainings, and compliance pledge for all existing and incoming Council members, employees, interns, panelists, Local Cultural Council members, and other representatives of Mass Cultural Council as a part of an Anti-Racism Harassment Policy (to be created) by Fall 2022.
- Add monthly internal anti-racism/racial equity lunch learnings/discussions, starting in Winter 2022.
- Have employees complete a quarterly qualitative internal survey and rating to measure the Agency's progress towards anti-racism/racial equity objectives starting Winter 2022.
- Develop an acknowledgement receipt of the Agency's Racial Equity Plan for external contractors and, to the extent we are able, vendors by Winter 2022.

Goal: To perpetuate BIPOC value to the sector, provide leadership opportunities for BIPOC employees, and to assure that all Agency decisions and processes are equitable and inclusive of BIPOC experiences, Mass Cultural Council will:

FISCAL YEAR 22

- Define and support the purpose, goals, authorities, and the objectives of the People of Color (POC) Employee Affinity Group and BIPOC Creative Youth Development (CYD) Alumni Council, by Fall 2022.

FISCAL YEAR 23

- Work with the POC Employee Affinity Group to create a Mentorship Program for BIPOC employees by Summer 2023.

ONGOING

- Work towards equal BIPOC/non-BIPOC representation in all levels of employment (Director, Supervisor, Manager, Officer, Administrator) as positions become available.
- Work to achieve and maintain equal BIPOC/non-BIPOC representation of all contractors and vendors.
- Provide aid for the creation of spaces, activities, and affinity groups in support of the additional needs of our BIPOC employees and employees from other systemically excluded marginalized populations stemming from the negative and emotional effects of racism and other oppressions.

Still image from the film *In the Absence of Things* (2020) by Mariona Lloreta (Film & Video Fellow '21).



Goal: To transparently and publicly communicate our commitment to anti-racism/racial equity/decolonization in the cultural sector and hold ourselves accountable, Mass Cultural Council will:

FISCAL YEAR 22

- Increase racial equity messaging and philosophies across agency communications channels and tools (e.g., newsletter footers, employee presentations) starting Fall 2021.

ONGOING

- Build and share a quarterly Race Equity Plan progress report to the cultural sector and the Council.
- Enhance visibility of and for BIPOC institutions and applicants by regularly featuring them in at least 50% of our public content, annually.

Goal: To perpetuate a culture of anti-racism and racial equity in governance and institutional oversight, Mass Cultural Council's governing Council will:

ONGOING

- Include anti-racism/racial equity updates on every Council meeting agenda.
- Update the Agency's Racial Equity Plan at every Spring Council meeting.
- Include anti-racism/racial equity goals for all established Council committees, task forces, and working groups annually.
- Strive to increase BIPOC representation on Mass Cultural Council's governing Council, and actively work to remove any barriers that hinder BIPOC members from serving as chairs and co-chairs of all Council committees, task forces, and working groups.
- Build a pipeline and source prospective BIPOC Council members to recommend to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions as Council seats become available.
- Include intersectional justice training for the Council, committees, and staff annually.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

This plan addresses the Agency's desire to be an equitable and inclusive state agency and to embody principles of racial equity, inclusiveness, and diversity in its operations, programming, and grant making. Notwithstanding any interpretation to the contrary of the language of the plan, nothing contained herein is meant or intended in any way to direct, mandate, suggest, or advise the Agency, its Council members, employees, or constituents to act in a manner inconsistent with the requirements of federal or state non-discrimination laws or other applicable laws or with the Agency's status as an equal opportunity employer. The aim of this plan is to create and support the inclusion of BIPOC individuals and organizations into all aspects of the Council's activities but not to, in any way, promote the exclusion of any person or any exclusionary practice.

GLOSSARIES

- **Racial Equity Tool Glossary**
- **Racial Equity Institute Glossary**
- **Council Office of Racial Equity**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RACIAL EQUITY PLAN TASK FORCE

Ann Petruccelli Moon+	Barbara Schaeffer Bacon^
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Jay Paget	Jen Lawless
Kalyn King*	Käthe Swaback
Lisa Simmons*	Maggie Holtzberg
Marc Carroll^	Michael J. Bobbitt+
Mina Kim	Nina Fialkow^
Ricardo Guillaume	Sara Glidden
Simone Early^	

Full list of Council Members

Full list of Employees

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Kelly J. Barsdate (NASAA),
Mass Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD),
Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General

DISCUSSION GROUPS MEMBERS

After months of internal work with our racially-diverse staff, Council, and task force, Mass Cultural Council reached out to numerous industry professionals to provide their personal feedback on the plan. The Agency is grateful for their perspectives, lived experience, and input and want to acknowledge that participation in these groups and providing feedback on this plan does not necessarily constitute endorsement of the plan. The plan was revised after each discussion group. Below is a list of those who shared their thoughts, knowledge, and experiences in the creation of this plan.

Allentza Michel, Principal and Creative Director – Powerful Pathways

Bayda Asbridge, Artist

Catherine Carr Kelly, Executive Director – Central Square Theater

Chris McCarthy, CEO – Provincetown Art Association and Museum

David Snead, President and CEO – Handel and Haydn Society

Dawn Simmons, Executive Director – StageSource

Elizabeth James-Perry, Aquinnah Wampanoag marine scientist and cultural educator

Gwendolyn VanSant, CEO and Founding Director – BRIDGE

Jason Montgomery, writer, painter, public artist, and playwright – Attack Bear Press

Juan Fernando Lopera, Chief DEI Officer – Beth Israel Lahey Health

Karthik Subramanian, Managing Director – Company One Theatre

Kathleen C. Brittan, Executive Director – Blue Heron

Kristen van Ginhoven, Producing Artistic Director – WAM Theatre

Larry Smallwood, Deputy Director – The Clark Art Institute

Lindsay Minihan, Executive Director – Metalwerx

Marian Taylor Brown, PHD, Co-Director of Abundance – Arts Connect International

Pam Breaux, President and CEO – National Assembly of State Arts Agency

Rhonda Anderson, Commissioner – Commission on Indian Affairs and Co-Director – Ohketeau Cultural Center and the Native Youth Empowerment Foundation

Robert Cinnante, President – South Shore Conservatory

Torrie Allen, President and CEO – Arts Midwest

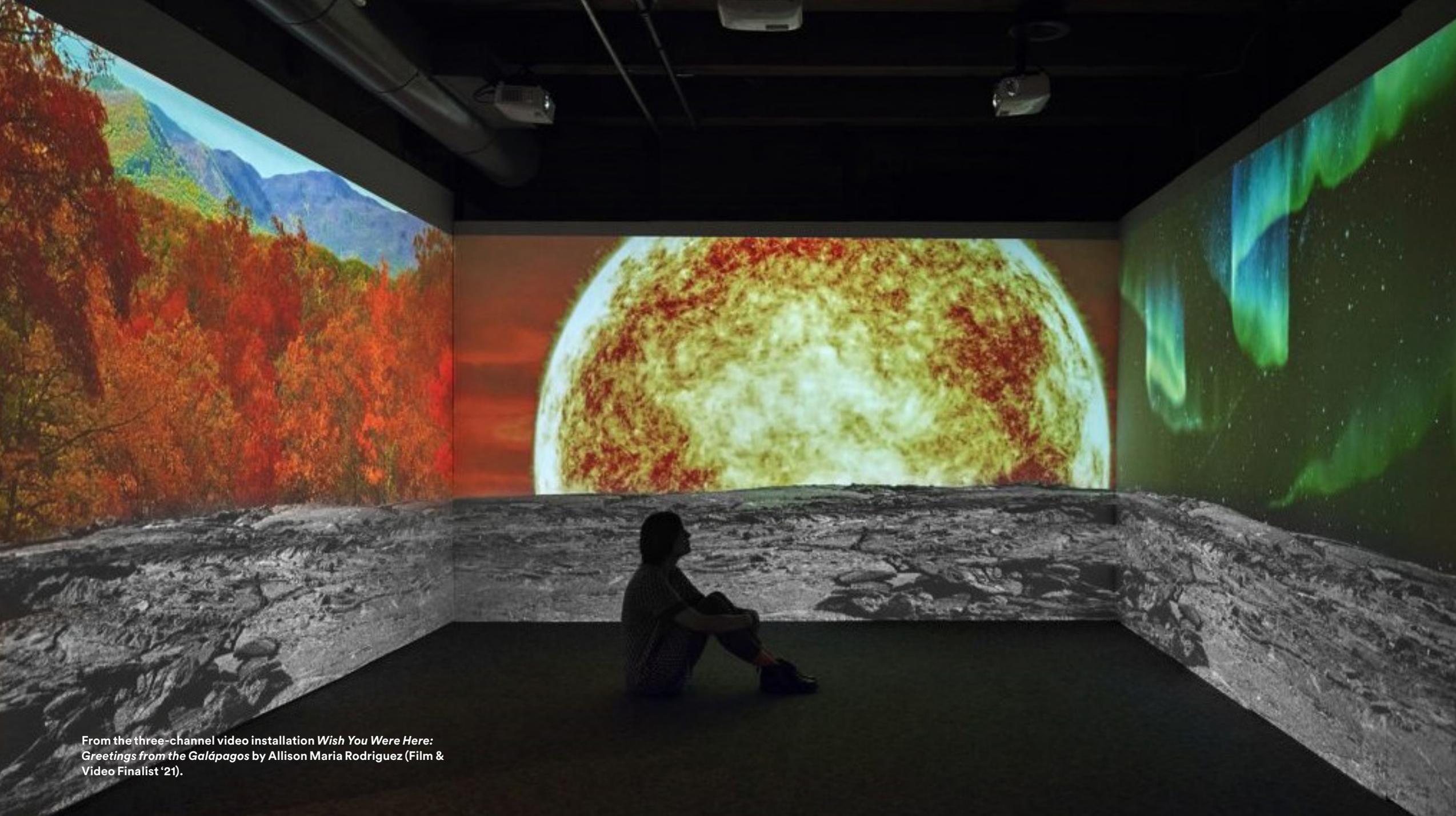
Tracy Kraus, Executive Director – Worcester Chamber Music Society

Quita Sullivan, Senior Program Director for Theater – New England Foundation for the Arts

*Task Force Leader

+Additional Content

^Council Members



From the three-channel video installation *Wish You Were Here: Greetings from the Galápagos* by Allison Maria Rodriguez (Film & Video Finalist '21).